IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A porous separator for an electrochemical cell, comprising:

(A) a flexible perforated support,

(B) a first porous ceramic material coated as a first layer directly on the flexible perforated support and which fills the perforations in the flexible perforated support, and which

(i) has a pore structure having an average pore size, and

(ii) may comprise an ion-conducting electrolyte,

~~wherein~~

(C) ~~an electrolyte-contactable pore~~ a second layer covering the surface of the first layer of the first porous ceramic material ~~is covered a second layer comprising~~ wherein the second layer comprises fine particles of a ~~further~~ second material, wherein the average particle size of the fine particles [[are]] is in the range from 0.5 to 30% of the average pore size of the first porous ceramic material and at least a portion of the pores of the first porous ceramic material are filled with the fine particles of the second material, wherein the second material is at least one selected from the group consisting of Li_2CO_3, Li_3N, $LiAlO_2$ and $Li_xAl_yTi_z(PO_4)_3$ wherein $1 \leq x \leq 2$, $0 \leq y \leq 1$ and $1 \leq z \leq 2$.

Claim 2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The separator of claim 2, wherein the ~~further~~ second material ~~of the fine particles~~ is different from the first porous ceramic material.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The separator of claim 2, wherein the ~~further~~ second material ~~of the fine particles~~ comprises one or more selected from the group consisting of SiO_2, Al_2O_3, ZrO_2 and SiC.

Claim 5 (Canceled).

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The separator of claim 1, ~~comprising~~ wherein the first porous ceramic material comprises the ion conducting electrolyte.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The separator of claim 1, wherein the fine particles are incorporated in the first porous ceramic material and are exposed ~~on the pore~~ the surface.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The separator of claim 1, wherein the first porous ceramic material is coated with the fine particles.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The separator of claim 1, wherein the first porous ceramic material has an average pore size in the range from 50 nm to 5 μm.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The separator of claim 1, wherein the first porous ceramic material ~~comprising fine particles~~ has a porosity in the range from 10% to 70%.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The separator of claim 1, wherein the first porous ceramic material comprises one or more oxides selected from the group consisting of zirconium oxide, silicon oxide and aluminum oxide.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The separator of claim 1, wherein the first porous ceramic material is produced by solidifying a slip which contains first particles having a large average particle size which determine a pore structure of the first porous ceramic material and second particles having a smaller average primary particle size than the average particle size of the first particles and which adhere the first particles together during the solidifying of the slip.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The separator of claim 1, wherein the flexible perforated support comprises polymeric fibers, glass or ceramic.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The separator of claim 1, wherein the flexible perforated support comprises fibers.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The separator of claim 1, wherein the flexible perforated support comprises fibers and/or filaments from 1 to 150 μm and/or yarn from 3 to 150 μm in diameter.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The separator of claim 1, wherein the flexible perforated support is a nonwoven having a pore size from 5 to 500 μm.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The separator of claim 1, wherein the separator is stable under service conditions at not less than 100°C.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The separator of claim 1, wherein the separator ranges from 10 to 1 000 μm in thickness.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The separator of claim 1, wherein the separator tolerates a bending radius down to 100 mm.

Claims 20-31 (Canceled).

Claim 32 (Previously Presented): The separator of claim 1, wherein the first layer of the first porous ceramic material further comprises an adhesion promoter.

Claim 33 (Currently Amended): The separator of claim 1, wherein the first layer of the first porous ceramic material further comprises at least one adhesion promoter ~~comprising~~ having at least one organofunctional group selected from the group consisting of a glycidyl group, a methacryloyl group, an amino group, and a vinyl group.

Claim 34 (Previously Presented): The separator of claim 1, wherein the first layer of the first porous ceramic material contains an adhesion promoter having at least one of a glycidyl group and a methacryloyl group.

Claim 35 (Previously Presented): The separator of claim 1, wherein the first layer of the first porous ceramic material comprises at least one adhesion promoter selected from the group consisting of 3-aminopropyltriethoxysilane, 2-aminoethyl-3-aminopropyltrimethoxysilane, 3-glycidyloxytrimethoxysilane, and 3-methacryloyloxypropyltrimethoxysilane.

Claim 36 (New): The separator of claim 1, wherein the first layer consists of the first porous ceramic material.

Claim 37 (New): The separator of claim 1, wherein the second layer consists of the second material.

Claim 38 (New): The separator of claim 1, wherein the first layer consists of the first porous ceramic material, the second layer consists of the second material and the first and second materials are different.

Claim 39 (New): The separator of claim 1, wherein the second material is Li_3N.